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RR RUEHDBU RUEHLN RUEHPOD RUEHSK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHVK #0117 3370605  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 030605Z DEC 09  
FM AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1243  
INFO RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0527  
RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHVK/AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK 1348

UNCLAS VLADIVOSTOK 000117

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

MOSCOW FOR JUSTICE - TOM FIRESTONE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [SCUL](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: CORRUPTION FIGHTER ASTAFYEV REPORTEDLY TO ACCEPT PLEA  
BARGAIN

REF: A) VLADIVOSTOK 107 B) VLADIVOSTOK 79

1. Summary. Militia Colonel Aleksandr Astafyev, who was arrested on trumped up charges in June in an attempt by some local authorities to neutralize his anti-corruption campaign, may be ready to make a plea bargain. Investigators reportedly have still been unable to assemble adequate evidence and have offered a conditional sentence if he admits guilt. Evidence or not, he remains in jail and evidently has been pressured enough. End Summary.

12. Astafyev continues to languish in a local jail (see Ref A). We understand that investigators still have been unable to obtain credible evidence to prove their accusations that he was involved in fraudulent activity or any other violations of his duties. Instead, they have offered a conditional sentence if Astafyev pleads guilty.

13. The Director of Far Eastern State University's Organized Crime Study Center, Vitaliy Nomokonov, told us on December 2 that Astafyev's son had recently asked for his advice about whether Astafyev should accept the prosecutor's plea bargain. Nomokonov had advised Astafyev not accept the offer because the investigation has nothing against him and is only seeking ways to justify the arrest.

14. Nevertheless, Nomokonov added, investigators have pressured Astafyev enough, and he is ready to accept the bargain in order to leave the pre-detention center until the court hearings. Nomokonov pointed out that this means that Astafyev will definitely be sentenced, receiving probably a conditional sentence.

15. Comment. Astafyev is a close Consulate contact who participated in a State Department-sponsored International Visitors Program devoted to fighting corruption. He has been a well known speaker at seminars organized by the Far Eastern National University's Organized Crime Study Center (OCSC) and had received a grant from the OCSC to write about violent corporate takeovers in Primorye.

16. Earlier, Astafyev passed a note to the U.S. Consulate requesting American assistance (see Ref B). His spouse has told us that he would like to move to the U.S. as refugee when his case is over. End Comment.

ROTTERING